

Tatjana Maria misses out on Wimbledon final despite impressive performance

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07/07/2022 Tatjana Maria's dream journey in Wimbledon is over. Despite another impressive showing, the Porsche Team Germany player has missed out on reaching the Wimbledon final after losing 2-6, 6-3, 1-6 against the world No. 2 Ons Jabeur from Tunisia on Thursday. She was nevertheless the surprise package of the 135th edition of the world's longest-standing and most prestigious tennis tournament.

Semifinal

What a wonderful gesture by the victor as after the final point, Ons Jabeur took the defeated Tatjana Maria by the hand and returned onto Centre Court to receive the acclaim of the crowd together. “I love

her," said the Tunisian in the on-court interview. "She's an inspiration for so many players, for me too." Tatjana Maria was visibly touched long after the match in the Sky studio. "It was her moment. She had just made it to the Wimbledon final. Wanting to share her joy with me shows just what a wonderful person she is."

Tatjana Maria needed a long time to settle in the most important match of her career, one that has been full of ups and downs. The first mother of two to appear in a Wimbledon semifinal since Margaret Court in 1975 gave the impression of being very nervous and went a break down in her second service game. It cost her the first set but in the second, she once again became the comeback queen that had pulled a number of matches out of the fire during the course of the tournament. The WTA world ranked No. 103 then relaxed, broke her opponent's serve for the first time to level at one-set all. Ons Jabeur came back impressively. On a 10-match winning streak on grass before Wimbledon, the world No. 2 and winner of the WTA tournament in Berlin was then the more aggressive and courageous player. In the end, the Tunisian, a close friend of the Maria family who sometimes looks after the daughters Charlotte and Cecilia at tournaments, closed out the decisive third set in comfortable fashion.

"I obviously knew it was going to be a tough match as she also hits heavy slices and fantastic drop shots. We're pretty similar in how we play," said Tatjana Maria. "Especially in the third set, she hardly made any mistakes and had little trouble in wrapping up the match. Now I hope she'll also win the final." Ons Jabeur is the first player from Africa to reach a Grand Slam final where she will meet the Kazakh Elena Rybakina on Saturday.

No matter how much the defeat hurts, Tatjana Maria can be proud of what she has achieved in Wimbledon. With her impressive performances and friendly manner, she, together with her family, has won over the hearts of the world's tennis fans. The Maria's daily lives were described in the sports sections of the newspapers in almost as much detail as the action on the courts. However, the German who has lived in Florida for many years, had not only talked about how she manages to balance remote learning with Charlotte and changing Cecilia's diapers with professional tennis. In the many interviews she had to give during her time in Wimbledon, she has also used her new popularity to plead for ways to make it easier for mothers to return to the Tour. Only two other mothers competed this year at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, namely Serena Williams and Yanina Wickmayer. In Tatjana Maria's mind, if there was improved childcare during everyday tournament life plus a child friendly order of play, then there would be more mothers on tour. She nevertheless has set her priorities, "My children come first and then tennis."

Tatjana Maria started her 35th career Grand Slam with a three-set 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 win against the Australian qualifier Astra Sharma. Awaiting the German in the second round was the first seeded player she encountered, namely the Romanian Sorana Cirstea (No. 26) who was dispatched in three sets, 6-3, 1-6, 7-5. Against the Greek Maria Sakkari, currently the world No. 5, she only needed two sets – 6-3, 7-5. She then played her best match up until then against the Latvian Jelena Ostapenko in the round of the last 16. The 2017 French Open champion and No. 12 seed was brought to the verge of despair by her slices. Especially on fast surfaces like grass, such balls bounce very low forcing opponents to rush their shots and make mistakes. She also won her first WTA title in Mallorca in 2018 on turf. Another

strength won her lots of points was her unbelievable mobility. She retrieved balls that appeared to be unretrievable, something for which her quarterfinal opponent Jule Niemeier was full of praise: “Tatjana is always in the place where the ball is in the end. I’ve got no idea how she does it. “

Impressive performance by Jule Niemeier from the Porsche Talent Team

When playing Tatjana Maria, the German youngster, who has been supported in the Porsche Talent Team since 2018, was tactically well-focussed, but it was not enough for her to win the sensational match. Nevertheless, the second Tuesday in Wimbledon was a German day of emotional celebrations. After embracing intimately at the net, Jule Niemeier shaped her hands to form a heart and departed from the world's most famous Centre Court to thunderous applause.

“I’d have loved to have not let her go,” said Tatjana Maria later in an interview. “She was super and she really was happy for me. We can be proud to have played such a match for Germany.”

Jule Niemeier was also one of the positive features in Wimbledon and, after her impressive performances, she stands for the future of German women's tennis. Along her incredible path to the quarterfinals, the 22-year-old knocked out the Estonian Anett Kontaveit, the No. 2 seed, and also showed no sign of nerves in her last 16 match against the Briton Heather Watson who was cheered on loudly by the spectators in the time-honoured Centre Court. After the French Open this spring, it was the world No. 97's second ever Grand Slam main draw appearance. Going all the way to the quarterfinals was thus an incredible performance by the avowed Borussia Dortmund fan who was congratulated by the club's German international players Mats Hummels and Nico Schlotterbeck.

Last year, she made her Porsche Team Germany debut in the Billie Jean King Cup whilst this year in April, she appeared for the time in the main draw of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix – and now she was hitting the headlines in Wimbledon. What a step up.

Going so far at the world's most important tournament gives her not only strength but also confidence for her career. “I’m very optimistic,” she said when bidding farewell to Wimbledon, “that it will not be my last Grand Slam quarterfinal.”

Quarterfinal

Tatjana Maria is living her tennis dream in Wimbledon. In Tuesday's sensational quarterfinal, the first involving two German players since 2012, she beat Jule Niemeier from the Porsche Talent Team 4-6, 6-2, 7-5 in a thriller lasting two hours 18 minutes. It means she has advanced to a career first Grand Slam semifinals at her 35th major.

When Jule Niemeier's last shot landed in the net, Tatjana Maria just could not believe her luck. She let

her racket drop, put her hands to her face and cried tears of joy. It was the moment that Wimbledon was a sensation richer, and the enthralled spectators were cheering the Porsche Team Germany player as if she had won the world's most prestigious tournament.

"I had goose bumps all over. It was such a tough match. But I think Jule and I have done tennis Germany proud," said the world No. 103 after the biggest success of her career. "I just tried to have fun and play point for point. It's a dream being able to experience it all with all my family. One year ago, I gave birth to my second daughter and now I'm standing in the Wimbledon semifinals. Words just can't describe it."

Last year, Angelique Kerber reached the semifinals on the Church Road in south-west London. The Porsche Brand Ambassador was also a part of the last all-German quarterfinal back in 2012 when she won against Sabine Lisicki.

The match was in no way so spectacular as the one between Tatjana Maria and Jule Niemeier. It had the crowd on its feet cheering the two players on. The 22-year-old Porsche Talent Team player got off to the better start when breaking the serve of her experienced opponent. However, Tatjana Maria showed no signs of being overawed. Like in her victories against the seeded Sorana Cirstea (No. 26), Maria Sakkari (No. 5) and Jelena Ostapenko (No. 12), the 2017 French Open champion, in the last 16, she quickly battled her way back into the match after some initial nervousness. After losing the first set and going a break down in the second, she then pulled out all the stops.

The two Germans played above themselves in the third set and the match turned into a real thriller. Once again Tatjana Maria lost her serve to first trail 3-2 and then 4-2. However, the words "give up" are obviously not in her vocabulary. The comeback queen, who now lives with her family close to the Williams sisters in Florida, broke back and levelled the score at 4-4. Her third game in a succession put her 5-4 up. In reaching the Wimbledon quarterfinals, Jule Niemeier had achieved more than any other Porsche Talent Team player. The youngster continued to battle for every ball and got back to 5-all. But Tatjana Maria was not going to let the biggest triumph in her incredible career slip through her fingers and clinched victory two games later. The two-time winner on the WTA Tour – Mallorca in 2018 and Bogota this year in April – had previously also defeated both Sorana Cirstea and Jelena Ostapenko 7-5 in the deciding set.

It now means she is the sixth German player to reach the Wimbledon semifinals in the open era – after Steffi Graf, Bettina Bunge, Angelique Kerber, Sabine Lisicki and Julia Görges.

Last 8

Two members of Porsche teams are continuing to cause surprises in Wimbledon. Porsche Team Germany's Tatjana Maria and Jule Niemeier from the Porsche Talent Team progressed on Sunday to the quarterfinals of the world's most famous tournament where they will face each other for a place in the penultimate round on Tuesday.

Traditionally, the Middle Sunday was a day off. No longer, as the rule was broken for the first time at the 135th Championships, and the last German players in the tournament took full advantage of the situation. Firstly, Tatjana Maria managed to defeat the No. 12 seeded Latvian Jelena Ostapenko 5-7, 7-5, 7-5 after staving off two match points in a sensational match on No. 1 Court. Then on Centre Court, Jule Niemeier beat host country's Heather Watson 6-2, 6-4 in front of a 15,000 crowd.

Tatjana Maria secured herself a place in the quarterfinals with a remarkable never-say-die performance. In the first set, she was 3-1 down, in the second 4-1 and then 2-0 behind in the third. However, the world No. 103 remained positive and never gave up. She retrieved seemingly unreachable balls and forced the 2017 French Open champion to the verge of despair. In the final statistics, the Latvian had made 57 unforced errors and the German only 15. She nevertheless had to face two match points when trailing 5-4 in the second set – and she staved them both off on this memorable day on the Church Road in south-west London.

"When I lost my serve at the start of the third set, you were there for me. I thought, okay they believe in me, so I'll believe in myself too" – the words with which a visibly overcome Tatjana Maria thanked the thrilled crowd. The 34-year-old from south Germany gave birth to her second child last summer and, after a spot of maternity leave, she returned to the Tour in autumn. Asked about it by the on-court interviewer, she said: "I'm so proud to be a mum. It's the most beautiful feeling in the world. Being able to enjoy this tournament with my family makes it all the more special." After her second WTA title in Bogota in April, she appears to be in the form of her life.

In front of a sell-out 15,000 crowd on Centre Court, Jule Niemeier had less trouble in keeping her Wimbledon dream alive. The 22-year-old German, who is supported in the Porsche Talent Team, was a comfortable straight sets winner against the experienced Briton Heather Watson. She only required 77 minutes to advance to the quarterfinals. No other Porsche Talent Team player has ever gone so far at a Grand Slam tournament, and she did it in front of several former Wimbledon champions who had assembled on Centre Court today to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the tournament on the Church Road.

"I can't really believe what I'm experiencing here. This tournament is so very special. Thanks very much for the fantastic atmosphere," said Niemeier, the world No. 97, after her biggest career achievement to date. "I was incredibly nervous before the match. But when I got out on court, I was totally focussed on my game, played point for point and didn't make many mistakes. I'm really proud of myself."

This now means that two players from Porsche teams will face each other in the quarterfinals of the world's biggest tennis tournament. It also means that one of them will reach the round of the last four. The German tennis fairy tale has not yet come to an end.

Last 16

Jule Niemeier's Wimbledon dream is continuing. The Porsche Talent Team player also won her third-

round match on Friday 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 against the Ukrainian Lesja Tsurenko to progress to the last 16 at the world's most famous tennis tournament. She is now set to face the local hero Heather Watson on Sunday. Also in the last 16 is Tatjana Maria, a Porsche Team Germany member.

Germany's Jule Niemeier today continued her winning streak on Court No. 18, one of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club's outside courts and one that has gained a degree of notoriety over the years. After her sensational straight sets victory against the world ranked No. 3 and Wimbledon No. 2 seed Anett Kontaveit from Estonia, the 2019 Porsche Tennis Grand Prix runner-up, the youngster faced stiffer opposition in her match against Lesja Tsurenko. After quickly going 3-0 behind, she eventually took the first set 6-4. The German once again trailed 3-0 in the second and once again levelled the score at 3-all, but this time to no avail. Hugely tenacious and with nerves of steel, she proved to be the better player in the decisive set. After battling hard for 2 hours 4 minutes, Jule Niemeier converted her first match point to celebrate the biggest win of her career to date.

"Last 16 at Wimbledon – everything is so surreal. I haven't had the time to let it all sink in and fully realise just what has happened," said Jule Niemeier in the Sky interview about two hours after her victory. "Reaching the next round really is a great feeling and I hope I can play Heather on one of the main courts again. The chances look pretty good. I'm so looking forward to the match."

2022 could well turn out to be Jule Niemeier's big tennis year. Four weeks ago, she claimed her first career WTA title in Makarska, Croatia – and now on her first appearance in the Wimbledon main draw, she has advanced to become the tournament's surprise package. She is the first player supported by the Porsche Talent Team to reach the fourth round at a Grand Slam tournament and has even beaten a Top 10 player on the way.

On Sunday, the first time there will be scheduled matches on the so-called "Middle Sunday" in the history of Wimbledon, Jule Niemeier will take on the unseeded local hero Heather Watson for a berth in the quarterfinals. The encounter also promises to be a tight affair as only a few places separate the players in the world rankings. The German is currently No. 97, and the Briton is ranked 109.

"I've already played her this year and lost 7-6 in the third," said Jule Niemeier when looking ahead to the next port of call on her Wimbledon journey. "It'd be nice if things were the other way round this time."

Tatjana Maria also sensationally into the fourth round

After Jule Niemeier's surprise performance, Tatjana Maria also caused a major upset. The Porsche Team Germany player has also advanced to the fourth round on the back of a sensational 6-3, 7-5 success against the No. 5 seeded Greek Maria Sakkari.

The 34-year-old mother of two, currently world ranked No. 103, trailed 4-1 and 5-2 in the second set but fought her way back to eventually clinch victory against one of the big favourites for the win at the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club with her second match point. Tatjana Maria, who won the

WTA tournament in Bogota in April, has thus progressed to the last 16 of a Grand Slam for the very first time. She will now meet the Latvian Jelena Ostapenko, the 2017 French Open winner, on Sunday. The Porsche Brand Ambassador Angelique Kerber has however exited the tournament. The Porsche Brand Ambassador Angelique Kerber has however exited the tournament. The 2018 Wimbledon champion was defeated 6-4, 7-5 by the No. 24 seeded Belgian Elise Mertens.

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Markus Rothermel

Spokesperson Sports Communications
+49 (0) 170 / 911 0779
markus.rothermel@porsche.de

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Subline: Tatjana Maria (l) and Ons Jabeur

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Subline: Tatjana Maria (l) and Jule Niemeier

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Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart